

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1431

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 12079

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJ: TRAVEL CONTROLS: SOVIET REQUEST FOR FURTHER RELAXATION

REF: A. STATE 167045

B. MOSCOW 10937

1. EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING COMMENT ON MYSHKOV PRESENTATION REPORTED REFTEL A.

2. WHILE SOVIETS MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE POINT RE (A) RELATIVE AREA OF THEIR TEMPORARILY CLOSED OBLASTS VS. AREA OF OUR TEMPORARILY CLOSED STATES, AND (B) QUESTION OF MEANS OF TRANSPORT WITHIN CAPITAL AREAS (BOTH MATTERS WHICH EMBASSY RAISED PARA 2 REF B), WE FAIL TO SEE THAT THERE IS ANY IMBALANCE IN NUMBER OF TOWNS OPENED TO NOTE-FREE TRAVEL BY RECENT EXCHANGE OF NOTES (SEVEN AND SEVEN).

3. AS DEPTOFF POINTED OUT (PARA 4 REF A), MAIN PROBLEM LIES IN CONFUSING ADMINISTRATION OF COMPLEX TRAVEL REGULATIONS BY MOSCOW AUTHORITIES, WITH AD HOC TIGHTENINGS AND LOSSENING OF THE RULES. FOLLOWING ARE TWO RECENT POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS:

A. IN EARLY JUNE, MFA (SEMENOV) ORALLY INFORMED EMBASSY THAT NOTES WERE NO LONGER REQUIRED FOR DAY TRAVEL TOZAVIDOVO.
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OVERNIGHT TRAVEL, OF COURSE, CONTINUES TO REQUIRE UPDK

RESERVATION, WHICH IS TANTAMOUNT TO TRAVEL NOTE.

B. IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION AUGUST 5, SEMENOV CONFIRMED THAT NOTE-FREE TRAVEL IS ALLOWED TO BORODINO (MOSCOW OBLAST) BUT ONLY ON SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS (WHEN PANORAMA MUSEUM IS OPEN). REST OF WEEK TRAVEL IS NOT ALLOWED WITH OR WITHOUT A NOTE. SET AGAINST THESE ARE NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS:

(A) ON AUGUST 1 UVS REFUSED DAY TRIP BY ASST. AIR ATTACHE KOLT AND SECOND SECRETARY RONHOVDE TO YURYEV-POL'SKIY (OLD RUSSIAN TOWN IN OPEN AREA OF VLADIMIRSKAYA OBLAST), ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF STRONG SOVIET TENDENCY TO REFUSE ALL TRAVEL SLIGHTLY OFF THE INTOURIST-BEATEN TRACK EVEN THOUGH IT IS WITHIN OPEN AREAS NEAR MOSCOW.

(B) ON AUGUST 4, THREE EMBOFFS (INCLUDING EMBASSY TRAVEL OFFICER) WERE TURNED BACK BY ARMY ROADBLOCK OR ROAD AROUND LAKE SENEZHSKOYE. (DETAILS FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM). THIS IS THIRD INSTANCE OF SUCH BLOCKAGE (DESPITE RECENTLY REPEATED MFA ASSURANCES THAT LAKE PLUS SIX-KILOMETER RADIUS ARE INDEED OPEN), AND EMBASSY THEREFORE CONCLUDES THAT LAKE SENEZHSKOYE IS DE FACTO HALF CLOSED.

4. EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT ABOVE SITUATION IN MOSCOW WARRANTS U.S. CONCESSION OF NOTE-FREE TRAVEL TO BALTIMORE, PHILADELPHIA, AND FREDERICKSBURG, VA., AS PROPOSED IN SOVIET NOTE. AT MOST WE WOULD SUGGEST NOTE-FREE TRAVEL FOR DAY TRIPS TO ONE SMALLER TOWN (COMPARABLE TO ZAVIDOVO) PLUS SATURDAY-AND-SUNDAY-ONLY NOTE-FREE TRAVEL TO, E.G., MANASSAS, VA., WITH SIMULTANEOUS RESTRICTION OF SOVIET TRAVEL AROUND GETTYSBURG BATTLEFIELD TO MATCH LAKE SENEZHSKOYE RESTRICTION.

5. USDAO, MOSCOW, HAS RECENTLY EXPERIENCED A MARKED INCREASE IN TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND/OR HARASSMENTS. LT.COL. SACHANEN DIA, AA-4 HAS THE DETAILS.
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